



FIA Icon *online*

A product of the Michigan **Family Independence Agency**

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STATE OF MICHIGAN
**Family
Independence
Agency**

November 3, 2003

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TANF plan comment period

The FIA began the public comment period for its TANF State Plan in October. The plan outlines Michigan's use of its federal TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) grant. The FIA will accept comments through Dec. 5.

The TANF State Plan can be viewed on at www.michigan.gov/fia and clicking on "News, Information and Publications", "Reports", "State Plans and Federal Regulations".

Comments may be submitted through e-mail to FIA-TANF@michigan.gov and may also be submitted via fax to Mave Coxon at (517) 241-7570. For more information contact Mave Coxon at (517) 335-3609. Please also see the [TANF State Plan Comment Form](#)

My turn

**By Nannette M. Bowler, Director
Family Independence Agency**



Thanks to the hard work of people like you and hundreds of retired FIA employees, Michigan was awarded almost \$22 million in bonus payments from the federal government in September.

The FIA earned the bonus for success in our cash assistance programs during Fiscal Years 2001 and 2002. Michigan earned more than \$8.7 million for job entry performance ranking second in the nation in this area during FY 2002.

The state earned more than \$4 million for family formation and stability and almost \$9 million during FY 2001 for efforts in Food Assistance and child day care programs. Michigan earned the bonus funds because:

- Child day care cases increased because more low-income families entered the work force.
- Medicaid outreach through the MICHild program increased the number of program recipients.
- The number of working low-income households with children increased.
- Efforts from Project Zero, the state's welfare reform program.
- The number of Food Assistance households with children increased.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services distributed the funds, which are part of \$200 million in TANF bonuses to states and the District of Columbia for success in employment and other program achievements during the two years.

The bonus reflects our successful efforts to help families acquire work, Food Assistance and day care services. Access to these important services is necessary for low-income families to participate in work and put nutritious meals on the table for their families.



FIA Icon online

a publication of Michigan's
Family Independence Agency

Jennifer M. Granholm
Governor
State of Michigan

Family Independence Agency

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I want to thank you for your role helping Michigan citizens access these important services because there was a time, not very many years ago, when the talk about welfare reform included questions about why more qualifying families were not applying for and receiving food benefits.

Thanks to your hard work, participation in the federal Food Stamp Program by low-income Michigan families is growing more rapidly than in most states. That participation grew by nearly 9 percent between 2000 and 2001, making Michigan's rate of growth third in the nation.

This is an area where our hard work has reaped success and economic rewards for the state budget. For this, I say thanks for your contribution, however large or small, today and in the future.

New department to change FIA

Governor Jennifer M. Granholm signed **Executive Order 2003-18** Oct. 2 creating the Department of Labor and Economic Growth to promote job creation and economic growth in Michigan by centralizing and streamlining the state's job, workforce, and economic development functions.

The Department of Labor and Economic Growth will be created by renaming the Department of Consumer and Industry Services and merging many Department of Career Development functions into the new department along with several other key programs from other departments.

Functions to be transferred away from the new agency to the Family Independence Agency include the Bureau of Family Services – which oversees adult foster care, homes for the aged, child care homes/centers, child caring institutions, child placement agencies, adult/children camps, and court-operated facilities. The unit will move to the FIA and be renamed the **Office of Child and Adult Licensing**.

Two units administered through the FIA – **Michigan Commission for the Blind** and **Michigan Commission on Disability Concerns** as well as its Division on Deafness – will be transferred to the new state agency.

The licensing unit was part of the FIA until 1996 restructuring, when it was transferred to the Department of Consumer and Industry Services. In the same year, the commissions for the blind and disability concerns were transferred to FIA administration.

In addition to these changes, the Bureau of Health Services, that regulates health professionals, and the Bureau of Health Systems, that regulates hospitals, emergency medical services and nursing homes, will be transferred to the Department of Community Health.

The executive order will be effective Dec. 7 if not otherwise amended or rejected by the state Legislature. An executive order can be rejected by majority votes in both the state Senate and House. An earlier order on the same topic – Executive Order 2003-14 – was withdrawn after the Legislature objected to changes in the Worker's Compensation Appellate Commission.

For a complete copy of Executive Order 2003-18 [click here](#)

Letters policy

"Intercepted letters" correspondence must have the approval of the author to be printed. Unsigned letters and signed correspondence requesting the author's identity be hidden will not be published. Correspondence from customers or service applicants must be accompanied by a signed [Consent for Publication](#) form. This form can be downloaded from the MS Word template as form [0199.dot](#). The consent form must include the names of other family members cited in the letter. When correspondence comes from a minor, a parent must give approval by signing the consent form. In other cases the author should verbally approve the right to publish before correspondence is submitted.



Martha Lawrence



Tom Schwarz



Cynthia Travis

Intercepted letters

Date: Oct. 2
To: Bruce Bailey, Child Services Supervisor
Otsego County FIA, Gaylord
Subj: Commendations

I would like to commend the work both [Jerry Wells](#) and [Jody Schlaufman](#) did on behalf of William Besaw and Jessica Besaw, his mother. It took a considerable amount of time and effort to see to their wellbeing, time which is a rare commodity in their work.

I appreciate the protective stand Otsego County FIA has held on behalf of children through the years. Your children's services staff are great to work with. May this note of encouragement be a bright spot in these days of criticism and disparaging news in our field. Thank your staff for us on the work they do.

[Lyle Dorr](#)

Families First Supervisor

Child & Family Services of Northeast Michigan, Alpena

■ Jerry Wells and Jody Schlaufman are social services specialists with Otsego County FIA.

FIA people

FIA director [Nannette M. Bowler](#) announced winners of the first "Going the Extra Mile" awards during an Oct. 1 meeting in Lansing. The awards program was formerly known as the Director's Recognition Program and is now administered quarterly by FIA Office of Communications. Awardees included:

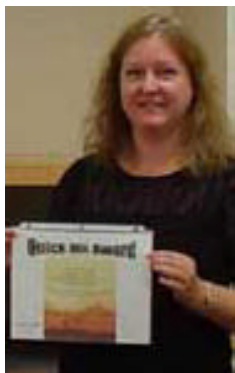
- [Paula Dietel](#), a family independence manager (FIM) from Antrim County FIA.
- [Wendy Griffen](#), a FIM from Shiawassee County FIA.
- [Cynthia Bare](#), a Children's Protective Services supervisor from St. Joseph County FIA.
- [Martha Lawrence](#), a secretary at the Wayne County FIA Taylor District office.
- [Paul Johnson](#), a welfare services specialist at Wayne County Child & Family Services Central Operations.
- [Vikki Bleil](#), a social services specialist with Macomb County FIA.
- [Ruth Goldman](#), a telecommunications manager with FIA Central Office in Lansing.
- [Katherine VanLoke](#), a financial manager with Wayne County FIA.
- [Yusif Barakat](#), a youth residential director with W.J. Maxey Boy's Training School in Whitmore Lake.

For more information on award winners, see their profiles at FIA-Net "Employee Information" by clicking on "Going the Extra Mile".

[Bowler](#) announced these appointments in September and October:

- [Irene Waller](#) as director of Lapeer-Sanilac County FIA, effective Oct. 26.
- [John Nelson](#) is manager of Zone 1, constituting the Upper Peninsula less Mackinac County.
- [Tom Schwarz](#) is manager of Zone 2, comprised of Mackinac and 21 northern Lower Peninsula counties.
- [Sharon Christensen](#) is manager of Zone 3, which includes most non-urban Lower Peninsula counties west of U.S. 127.
- [Cynthia Travis](#) is manager of Zone 4, which includes the remaining non-urban counties.

On Oct. 15, Outstate Operations director [Kathie McDonald](#) announced [Terry Salacina](#) had accepted the position of Urban Forum Manager in FIA Outstate Operations. He will work in consultation with zone and urban county directors to enhance service delivery in urban populations.



Elaine Saffron



Derek Hitchcock



James Kasprzak

Elaine Saffron was Benzie County FIA's first recipient of the new Heart of the Solution award. Her suggestion to help streamline the ASSIST transfer process resulted in her award. Elaine has been a word processing assistant at the Benzie County office for over 25 years. "Her dedication to doing it the right way and for finding the most efficient way to do things is how she came to make the suggestion to Heart of the Solution," said Cindy Nelson of Benzie County FIA.

Derek Hitchcock, director of the W.J. Maxey Boy's Training School near Whitmore Lake, was the member spotlighted by the Brighton Chamber of Commerce in its Sept-Oct 2003 issue of Update Magazine. Hitchcock, a member of the Maxey staff since 1977, was cited in connection with improved campus and community security, partnership with the University of Michigan School of Social Work that improved services, and the on campus education, food services and faith programs. "By the time the boys leave Maxey," the magazine said, "they have learned ...how to say the two words that can be the most difficult of all: thank you."

FIA Administrative Services director **James Kasprzak** was highlighted in a recent Lansing State Journal story. Kasprzak is a jazz trumpeter, participated in a Sept. 17 breakfast program featuring other musicians that are managers. The program addressed the crossover between art and management. "Jazz music is a conversation among the performers," Kasprzak told the State Journal. "In the business world, there's a certain aspect of the work that is also a conversation."

There were errors in Wayne County FIA appointments included in the September issue of FIA Icon Online. The following information is correct:

- **Sharon Jackson** is the interim manager of Zone VIII.
- **Michael Patterson** is interim manager of Zone X.
- **Gwendolyn Bush** interim program manager at Forest-Ellery District.
- **Joyce Johnson** is district manager of Forest-Ellery and McNichols Districts.

Monroe County receives FAP award at Big 10 conference

By Angie Jenerette, Director

Monroe County Family Independence Agency, Monroe

Jenerettea2@michigan.gov

Monroe County Family Independence Agency recently earned plaudits for lowering its Food Assistance error rate and received an award during the Big Ten Conference held Aug. 20-22 in Milwaukee, Wisc.

Monroe County director Angie Jenerette and Mark Homan, a family independence manager, attended the conference, whose theme was "A Whole New Ballgame". Using a PowerPoint presentation, Homan conducted a workshop to explain our best practices. The workshop was well received and many counties had numerous questions about what worked for us.

On Sept. 24, Monroe County hosted a celebration for the entire staff. The PowerPoint presentation was included. FIA Zone 3 specialist Gail Fournier attended along with local FIA Board Chairperson Carol Frederick. During the celebration Fournier presented the award to Jenerette while she and Frederick congratulated Monroe staff for their hard work and dedication.

The award – a beautiful 8 by 10-inch framed special achievement – said: "Their misissuance rate for the Food Assistance Program decreased from a high of 25.31 percent in 1998-99 to consistently being under 5 percent and was 0 percent for

SMP now AMP

In October the State Medical Program – or SMP – became the **Adult Benefits Waiver** program. In the FIA we call it the **Adult Medical Program**, or AMP.

Adults in the program have coverage changes. All enrolled individuals, including fee-for-service beneficiaries and County Health Plan members, will receive a permanent plastic identification card called the mihealth card. For more on this program, see FIA-Net, "Employee Information", "Customer Inserts", "Adult Benefits Waiver/Adult Medical Program Sept. 15, 2003".

fiscal year 2002. Their focus on customer failure to report changes has resulted in a significant improvement."

To view a copy of the PowerPoint presentation on Monroe County's best practices, [click here](#).

LEIN: Law Enforcement Information Network

By Alan Kimichik, Director and Mary Gartland, LEIN Terminal Agency Coordinator FIA Office of Inspector General, Lansing
gartlandm@michigan.gov

The Family Independence Agency works together with law enforcement agencies on ways to make home visits safer and more predictable for its employees. One important development in this area is the agency's link to the Law Enforcement Information Management System - known as LEIN.

In February 2002 the FIA started the process of making LEIN access available statewide to child welfare staff. This was made possible through a revision of state law and an agreement with the Criminal Justice Information Systems (CJIS) Policy Council.

LEIN is a statewide computer system that contains information gathered from various law enforcement agencies throughout Michigan. It is another way for FIA juvenile justice, adoption, foster care, and children's protective services staff to gain knowledge about persons living in a home they may be required to visit, or a home where a child may be placed.

Building awareness

LEIN information available to child welfare staff includes Michigan criminal conviction, arrest and charge history, personal protection orders, parole violations, outstanding warrants, concealed weapons permits and gun permits.

While LEIN may be very helpful in decision-making, everyone must remain vigilant and rely on their experience along with LEIN information to determine the level of risk to them or to a child in the home.

The FIA is one of very few non-law enforcement agencies to be given LEIN access. Because of our non-law enforcement status, Michigan State Police in conjunction with Criminal Justice Information Systems Policy Council developed operating guidelines outlining access, use and disclosure of LEIN information.

Because LEIN provides access to private information, there is a high level of security and confidentiality surrounding LEIN data. Individual transactions as well as overall policies and procedures are subject to audit and oversight by Michigan State Police.

The FIA Office of Inspector General director is a voting member of the Criminal Justice Information Systems Policy Council and supervises the FIA terminal agency coordinator. The terminal agency coordinator is versed and knowledgeable in rules, regulations, applications, and operation of LEIN. The coordinator serves as the main contact person for the agency, communicates all LEIN matters to agency administration as needed, acts on behalf of the departmental agency head as liaison with LEIN field services, investigates reported LEIN violations, and assists in the training of LEIN operators.

LEIN training for child welfare users is included in the worker safety curriculum of the Child Welfare Institute. Policy and procedures for child welfare staff on using LEIN may be found in the Child and Family Services Manual and in the user guide on the LEIN web site, located at FIA-Net under "Computer Systems".

Only child welfare staff members are authorized users. Authorized users are not required to be certified. Their job classification allows them to request and view LEIN information. LEIN access and information is not currently available to family independence and eligibility specialists, community resource coordinators, POS agencies, adult services, prevention or guardianship studies.

LEIN access may never be utilized by the local office for employee background checks. Any questions on what is proper or improper LEIN access should be directed to the LEIN terminal agency coordinator in Central Office, Mary Gartland.

Abuses of LEIN information - where it was alleged LEIN information was accessed, used or disseminated for personal reasons - is a violation of rules. It could result in the denial of access to LEIN for all FIA offices and the responsible individual may be subject to disciplinary action and/or criminal sanctions.

Operating procedures are clearly identified in FIA policy as required by both Michigan State Police and CJIS Policy Council. Penalties for misuse of LEIN are clear in LEIN Policy Council Act and state law (MCL 28.214, Section 4):

- A person shall not disclose information from the law enforcement information network to a private entity for any purpose, including, but not limited to, the enforcement of child support programs.
- A person shall not disclose information from the law enforcement information network in a manner that is not authorized by law or rule.
- A person who violates subsection (2) or (3) is: (a) For a first offense, guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for not more than 90 days or a fine of not more than \$500.00, or both; (b) For a second or subsequent offense, guilty of a felony punishable by imprisonment for not more than 4 years or a fine of not more than \$2,000.00, or both.

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LEIN training for terminal operators is held in the spring and autumn each year. The dates and locations are provided to local office LEIN coordinators and are posted on the LEIN web site. Central Office will send an email notification to the LEIN Coordinators when it is time to register for LEIN operator training. The operator guide is also found in the LEIN web site.

Both Michigan State Police and the FBI require that fingerprints are collected and background checks are conducted on all LEIN operators. An operator may be administrative staff, first line staff or manager.

The LEIN web site provides LEIN updates, training schedule, operator/user guides and a "frequently asked questions" section. Appropriate use of information from LEIN significantly assists FIA child welfare staff to carry out their duties in a safe working environment. Training requests, questions regarding LEIN access and policy may be forwarded to the LEIN Terminal Agency Coordinator, Mary Gartland, Office of Inspector General, 235 Grand Avenue Suite 11 15, Lansing or emailed to gartiandm@michigan.gov



Michael Hillman (left) and Arenac County FIA services supervisor Brian Millikin christen the new bridge (below) connecting Arenac FIA and Public Health facilities.



Bridging the gap in Arenac

By Karen S. Smith and Karin Hamling

Arenac County Family Independence Agency, Standish

Contact SmithK6@michigan.gov or HamlingK@michigan.gov

The space between Arenac County's FIA and Public Health facilities was never great but it got messy when wet. Now, thanks to the two agencies, local Boy Scouts and community merchants, the gap has been bridged.

Arenac County Family Independence Agency and the Arenac County Public Health Department hosted a bridge ribbon-cutting ceremony and luncheon Aug. 19 to show appreciation to Boy Scout Michael Hillman, who earned his Eagle Scout badge, and Boy Scout Troop 188 for building the 40-foot wood structure.

Arenac FIA, the Health Department and Troop 188 raised money and helped obtain supplies from Standish-area community businesses. Landlords for both agencies contributed one-third of the funds, which completed the entire project. Also, the Boy Scouts were treated to snacks and beverages by both agencies on hot summer days.

FIA staff, representatives from the Public Health Department, Arenac County commissioners, Arenac County FIA Board members, Boy Scout Troop 188 and their families were treated to a "Mexican fiesta" luncheon hosted by FIA staff. The Health Department provided the desserts.

Customers and employees will no longer have to walk in the wet valley that separated the two offices. This project took most of the summer but the end result was worth the wait.

Benzie Manistee relay raises \$2,850

By Sonja Reitan and Cindy Nelson, Benzie-Manistee Family Independence Agency

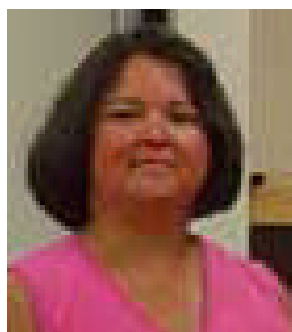
Reitans@michigan.gov or Nelsonc3@michigan.gov

The Benzie Manistee FIA Relay for Life team joined forces with "Kenna's Crusaders" this year to raise money for the American Cancer Society.

Sonja Reitan, the organizer for Kenna's Crusaders, led this new combined team to a huge victory! The Kenna's Crusaders Benzie-Manistee FIA team raised \$2,850 for the American Cancer Society this year. Kenna was Sonja's daughter who lost her battle with cancer a few years ago. The Aug. 9-10 fundraiser included the 24-hour relay in Elberta and related events, during which time Sonja's husband and sons all participated in the evening gown competition. "It warms a wife and mother's heart to see her family like this," Sonja said.

A booth owned by Sonja's son, Don, sold sandwiches from the Hungry Tummy Deli. Some of us slept in an authentic teepee that was provided by Sonja's nephew and his wife. We sold cookies, held a raffle and gave away candles and a gift certificate from a local restaurant. FIA employees, volunteers or local merchants donated all items. There was also a yard sale to raise money; donations came from all occupants of the governmental center, both FIA and Benzie County employees.

We had a great time, made new friends and Benzie County exceeded its goal of raising \$65,000 for this project. This is fantastic for little Benzie County. Thank you to all employees, who walked all night, donated food, money, and yard sale items and helped the workers with your moral support. We'll beat this awful disease one of these days with such heartfelt effort from all of us.



Cindy Nelson

Family Resource Centers

As part of the Children's Action Network initiative, the Family Independence Agency in August began operations at Family Resource Centers in elementary and middle schools around the state. By the end of October centers were serving families in Adrian, Flint, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Battle Creek, Benton Harbor, Mt. Clemens and Muskegon. The centers serve as a "one stop shop" for family services located within or near a neighborhood school. FIA family resource specialists work with students, their families and staff from local service agencies to help remove noneducational barriers to school performance. Centers operating through the end of October were situated in these schools:

- McKinley Elementary School, Adrian.
- Sorter Elementary School, Benton Harbor.
- Ann J. Kellogg Elementary School, Battle Creek.
- Washington, Bryant & Durant Turri Mott Elementary schools in Flint.
- Grand River Elementary Magnet School, Lansing.
- Harrison Park Elementary School, Grand Rapids.
- Mt. Clemens Middle School, Mt. Clemens.
- Steele Junior School, Muskegon.

Centers may open in as many as nine Wayne County schools in November, and operations in Saginaw are expected to commence soon.

Domestic Violence Board dating violence awareness Initiative

From Sarah Heuser

Michigan Domestic Violence and Treatment Board, Lansing

Heusers@michigan.gov

Moviegoers in four communities are seeing dating violence prevention messages played repeatedly on movie theater screens during the 15 minutes before feature films begin. Governor Jennifer Granholm announced the project in late June and the public service announcements started running at the Adrian Cinema July 7. Since then Celebration Cinema and NCG Theater in Lansing, Studio 28 in Grand Rapids, and Celebration Cinema in Mt. Pleasant have added PSAs to their movie previews.

The messages are specifically targeted to teenagers and young adults, because both groups are frequent moviegoers and at higher risk of violence in intimate relationships. The messages are a product of the Michigan Domestic Violence Prevention and Treatment Board, an independent unit of state government administratively housed in the FIA.

The board was awarded funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to coordinate development and implementation of the PSAs. The board worked in collaboration with domestic violence agencies and institutions of higher education from the four communities as well as the Michigan Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. The project goals are to:

- Build public awareness that dating violence is prevalent and affects every community.
- Inform communities of the services and resources available to dating violence survivors.
- Foster community involvement to actively prevent dating violence.

The domestic violence programs involved are Family Counseling & Services/ Catherine Cobb Domestic Violence Program, YWCA of Grand Rapids, Michigan State University Safe Place, Lansing's Ending Violence Encounters – also known as EVE – and Women's Aid Service in Mt. Pleasant.

The theater screen campaign is the second recent educational effort by the board to prevent youth dating violence. Last fall, the board distributed its Dating Violence Youth Education Package to every high school and Intermediate School District in the state. The package includes lesson plans for group leaders and other resource materials, and may be downloaded in PDF format from www.michigan.gov/fia/domesticviolence

These dating violence education and awareness initiatives were implemented as part of the board's response to legislation extending criminal justice protections against domestic violence to persons in dating relationships taking effect April 1, 2002.





Celebrating 25 years (above, l-r) are Jo Ann Pilarski, chairperson of Michigan Commission for the Blind, MCB director Patrick Cannon and Gov. Jennifer Granholm. Pilarski is a grade school teacher from Alpena who was recently appointed to another term as chairperson by the governor.

Governor at MCB 25th anniversary

From Patrick Cannon, Director
Michigan Commission for the Blind, Lansing
CannonP@michigan.gov

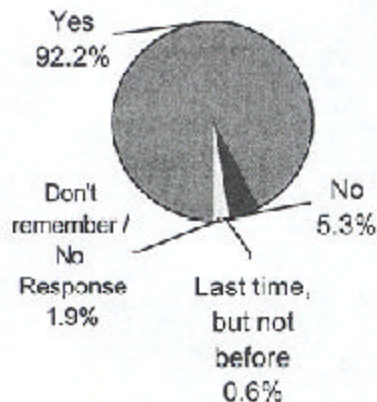
Governor Jennifer M. Granholm was in Kalamazoo Oct. 8 to congratulate the Michigan Commission for the Blind (MCB) on its 25th anniversary.

The MCB Training Center was the site of an open house celebration hosting close to 250 visitors that toured the center and exhibits showcasing commission services. A program highlighted commission history over the past 25 years and featured many individuals who have served as commissioners and staff during that time. The event also featured the successes of former clients of the Michigan Commission for the Blind. Granholm toured the center, visited with guests and made brief congratulatory remarks.

In addition to the Oct. 8 event each commission office conducted special 25th Anniversary events to mark the occasion at other times during the month and throughout the year. Legislation creating the Michigan Commission for the Blind – Public Act 260 – was enacted in October 1978. A special 25th Anniversary Planning Committee has been meeting to plan and help coordinate a series of activities to commemorate the work of the commission over the past quarter-century. This team is to be commended for an outstanding and successful kick-off event.

Survey: FIP customers satisfied with caseworkers, treatment

From the survey
B. Was Local Office Staff Courteous? (n = 3241)



According to a new survey, the relationship between FIA cash assistance specialists and their customers is generally good and customers typically say they are treated with respect and dignity.

These are among findings in the most recent "Customer Satisfaction" survey conducted by the FIA Survey Center during September-December 2002. The survey center is housed in the Office of Quality Assurance and is administered from Lansing.

The survey of 3,241 then-active FIP customers indicates 92 percent of respondents said local office staff are courteous with them. About 90 percent of respondents said workers usually treat them with respect and 82 percent said they had no problem with their caseworker during the past six months prior to their telephone interview.

Of the 15.7 percent reporting a problem with their caseworker, 53 percent said they could not reach their caseworker.

The survey, which also includes questions about contact between FIA specialists and customers and customer expectations, was conducted by telephone.

The survey can be viewed on FIA-Net under the "Accounting/Bus. Opps" and going to "Quality Control" and "Survey Center Reports". Other recent reports available for review at the site include information from customer telephone surveys on child care, child well-being and household characteristics.

Blackout food benefits totaled \$14.3 million

The FIA reported the following Food Assistance special allocations related to the Aug. 14 –16 blackout:

The agency issued \$14,366,480 worth of benefits to 365,855 persons in 159,905 households. The additional benefits were provided to replace benefits lost in five southeastern Michigan counties due to the power outage.

The benefits were issued as a result of a waiver approved by U.S. Food and Nutrition Service. The waiver allowed FIA to provide an extra half-month's worth of benefits to families in Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne counties most affected by the blackout.

Seeking student success stories

By Jennifer Wallace, Outreach Coordinator
Michigan Higher Education Assistance Authority, Lansing
Wallacejr@michigan.gov

We are looking for student success stories about folks now working who benefited from the **Tuition Incentive Program** (formerly an FIA program). I have had the honor of talking to many of them. We are looking for people to share their memories with us of people outside family members, who helped them along the way.

We are doing a huge recruitment effort to get more kids to go to college. It is called College Goal Sunday where we will be all over the state helping families. The date is February 8, 2004. We are working with the Partnership for Learning who received a grant from the Lumina Foundation.

The student success stories selected will be used in various College Goal Sunday publicity efforts. Stories will likely be used in print materials, on the Web site, in a press kit, and the student may be invited to be present and make comments at school assemblies.

As part of the publicity effort for Michigan's College Goal Sunday we want to solicit student financial aid success stories. Students that had guidance through the financial aid process, or financial assistance itself, made a real difference in their lives. It helped them overcome significant obstacles and achieve their educational goals.

Please contact me at wallacejr@michigan.gov or call me at **1-800-243-2847** if you can help.

Spirit of giving in Muskegon County

By Gail Kraft, Community Resource Coordinator
Muskegon County Family Independence Agency
KraftL@michigan.gov

Muskegon County FIA employees are great! They are caring individuals who carry out our true mission work in concrete ways. During September, they contributed almost \$3,000 in cash and food to help area pantries through the Monthly Miracles Drive. Some units held lunches, bake sales, ice cream and candy bar sales to raise money to donate.

Venettie Poston and **Dave Steggink's** units raised close to \$1,300 alone and deserve special accolades. And in the midst of this month of concentration on food, we heard about a special deal at Younkers where we could buy kids coats for \$10. Our staff generously came through with close to \$600, which purchased 60 coats for needy kids.

Thanks to **Diane Jenkins**, **Jackie Vines**, **Sharon Scott** and **Barb Klingenmaier** for their special help on these projects. Space does not allow me to mention everyone's name that went over and above but our entire staff has proven that they walk their talk, inside and outside of the office.